

January • March 2001

Government
Publications

Volume Number 4 • Issue Number 1

Access West

A New Strategy for Sustaining Western Canada's Future

The Government of Canada has made sustainable development (SD) a national goal and is taking action to ensure that Canadians can enjoy environmental, social and economic security now and in the future. Sustainable development is a way of recognizing that social, environmental and economic issues are interrelated and interdependent.

In May 2000, the Commission of the Environment and Sustainable Development released a report evaluating the performance of the sustainable development strategies of the 28 federal departments. In his report, the Commissioner highlighted key weaknesses in the management of environmental and SD issues and management practices required to implement SD principles.

Western Economic Diversification's (WD) Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) 2000 took into consideration these weaknesses, as well as the evaluation results of the Department's 1997 SDS. The 1997 strategy evaluation indicated that while WD had contributed to a number of SD projects, it needed to build SD practices into its daily business operations. In addition, the Department needed to demonstrate progress with measurable outcomes. These concerns have been addressed in the WD SDS 2000.

The WD SDS 2000 contains three main goals for the Department:

1. To facilitate the integration of sustainable development in the business practices of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Western Canada through our network partners;

2. To integrate sustainable development into the programs, services and activities that we deliver directly and in partnership; and
3. To foster a sustainable development culture within WD.

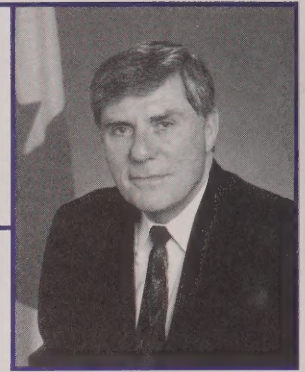
As a regional department that advances economic development in the western provinces, WD is positioned to enhance Western Canada's progress towards sustainable development within government and business.

Future generations have the right to a quality of life equal to that of today's generation. In order to achieve this objective, Western Economic Diversification embraces the concept of sustainable development and is working to integrate it into all aspects of its decision-making. For WD, this means sustainable development is achieved when full consideration is given to economic development, the preservation of the environment and the social well-being of Canadians.

The WD SDS 2000 includes an environmental performance measurement framework (PMF) that outlines how the Department will review, monitor and evaluate the achievement of the outlined goals and objectives. The PMF includes the collection of baseline data (where WD is beginning) and provides for regular reporting on performance to employees, stakeholders and the public.

For more information, or a copy of the WD SDS 2000, please contact Cynthia Hyslop - WD Headquarters at (780) 495-8384 or by e-mail: Cynthia.Hyslop@wd.gc.ca.

"I welcome the opportunity to include in each issue of Access West a column which allows me to share some of my thoughts on what the Department is currently involved with and some insight on its future undertakings," Ronald J. Duhamel, Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification.



Add an "E" to Small Business

Small businesses make a giant contribution to Canada's economy. In fact, they're responsible for creating nearly 80 per cent of all new jobs across the country.

My department, Western Economic Diversification Canada, is a one-stop source of business information and services for entrepreneurs in the four western provinces. We're here to help and this year we also encourage you to talk to us about the challenges and opportunities of e-business. The Canadian share of the Internet economy is poised to grow to \$155 billion and could create 180,000 incremental jobs by 2003.

We recently commissioned a study of what business in the West will be like in 2004. Over and over, Western entrepreneurs described their vision of a West where e-business and Internet technology had become indispensable to prosperity. Working together, we can help you put your business on line and ensure that western Canadians share in the benefits of the new economy. The future is here and you can be part of it.

Access West Gets New Editors During Take Your Kid to Work Day

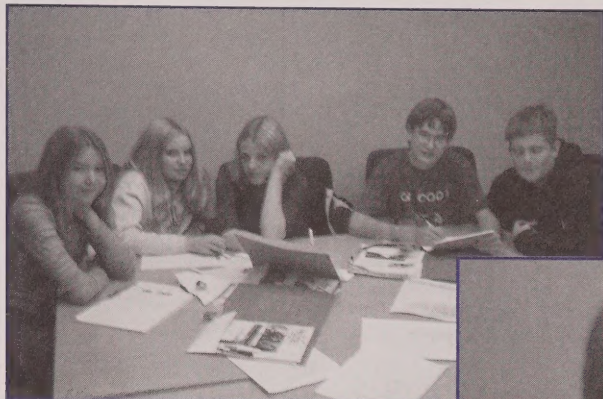
November 1st marked the start of **Canada Career Week**. This national event is celebrated annually in over 1,500 communities across the country. Canada Career Week highlights the importance of career planning and making informed decisions in a rapidly changing labour market. In celebration of the week, activities are held to help promote career awareness and provide opportunities for people to explore the world of work and discover career options.

During Canada Career Week, grade nine students across Canada are encouraged to accompany a parent, guardian or other role model to their workplace. This one-day event - Take Your Kid To Work Day - provides students with the opportunity to gain

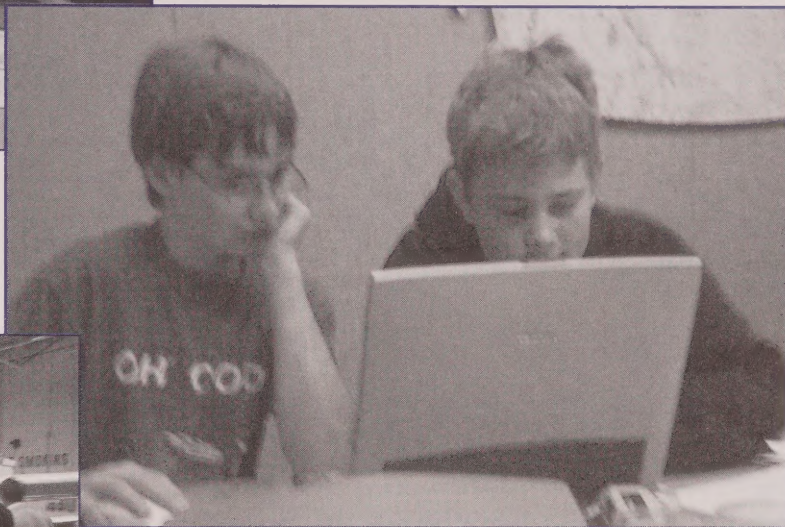
exposure to the world of work, gain respect for the contributions people make and to strengthen the bonds among parents, students and the community.

Western Economic Diversification's Edmonton office hosted five grade nine students on November 1, 2000, for Take Your Kid To Work Day. One of their challenges was to decide the content and layout for this issue of Access West. They did a terrific job and can be very proud of their issue.

Congratulations and thank you to Pamela, Athena, Aaron, Hilary and Jordan. Here are some of their comments they wrote on the day's activities.



Aaron and Jordan learn of some cool new Web sites and learn about advanced Internet search techniques.



We're hard at work making the January issue of the Access West newsletter. Left to right: Athena Bush, Hilary Kirkpatrick, Pam McCumber, Aaron Tabin and Jordan Levensconte.



Here we are checking out the planes at the Edmonton Flying Club at the Municipal Airport.

Pamela McCumber, D.S. MacKenzie High School

"For the first time in my life, I got to experience what it's like to be at work. We started the day with an introduction meeting to get to know each other and learn more about WD. After the introduction, we got to work. We organized the Access West January-March issue. After an hour of hard work, three Co-op students took us for a coffee break. We spent an hour with Maurice Brunelle on the computer. I would say that was probably the most interesting time of the day. In the afternoon, we went on site visits to learn about the Edmonton Flying Club and Atco Frontecs. At the very end of the day, we spent more time putting together Access West. Although I had fun today, I would rather be a veterinarian."

Aaron Tabin, Vimy Ridge Academy

"As part of this day, I was asked to contribute to this newsletter. The biggest challenge was to reach a consensus on which stories made the cut and which ones took the boot. When considering the Aboriginal article, it was originally dismissed, but after careful review I learned that an article like this has never been published in this newsletter. In my opinion, diversity is the thing that brings us together as Canadians."

Athena Bush, H.E.B. Catholic Junior High School

"I'm not going to forget today. It has been really tiring - it's been very real! I have more respect for my family and friends who work full-time jobs. This experience was good and I am thinking about a government job. People here are so kind, they have provided me with a useful learning experience."

Hilary Kirkpatrick, Hardisty Junior High School

"I got to my dad's work today around 8:30 a.m. and the first thing we did was have chocolate milk and doughnuts, then we got straight to work. Along with four other grade nine students, we put together Access West, figured out what articles should be put in it and then we went on the Internet. Although I had fun being an editorial person, I want to be a fashion designer or lawyer when I get older."

For more information about career learning and employment planning, check out the **Youth Resource Network of Canada** Web site at www.youth.gc.ca. This site is designed and managed by youth, and is an initiative of the Youth Employment Strategy of the Government of Canada and its partners. The site helps prepare youth for a career with the help from a group of existing programs and services. It offers a multitude of information on the employment world, such as the choice of careers, training and education, jobs offers, and links to provincial government career development centres.



Business Incubators:

Another Location Choice for New Small Businesses

For many individuals considering starting a small business the high costs of renting a location can stop them before they ever get started. One option for new, small businesses is to be home-based, but this has its drawbacks too. While usually more affordable, the lack of traffic and image portrayed by being home-based can reduce sales so much that it is not a viable option. There is, however, one other option – partner with other complementary small businesses under one roof, usually referred to as a business incubator.

The idea can work very well for many types of business, from retail, to commercial, to light industrial. The main idea of the incubator is to provide affordable rent, but also a more professional image, better location and many features that you wouldn't be able to afford if located alone. Typically, once the new business has an improved cashflow, they will move out to larger facilities, opening up space for other new businesses in the incubator.

Many incubators share the following resources:

- Central reception and receptionist and/or cash desk and cashier
- One phone system
- A photocopier
- A fax machine
- Washrooms
- Meeting room(s)

The interior is set up usually with free-standing walls or partitions that can be moved to accommodate the needs of each new tenant. Rent is usually charged on the basis of square-footage occupied.

When located in an incubator the benefits gained go beyond sharing expenses and an enhanced image. It gives the new business owner a "place" to go to work. One of the drawbacks of being home-based can be separating work and personal life, such as being distracted by the dishes, the housework OR always working because it is right there. Having a location out of the house forces the business to have more structure, usually forcing the owner to take the business more seriously. Another benefit is not working entirely alone. There may even be a possibility of sharing other resources with the other businesses in the incubator, such as: helping to handle sales calls when one person is out of the office, or answering customer questions that voice mail could never do!

Of course, the downside to an incubator is the fact that you probably won't be able to stay there forever, so you may have an added expense of moving at some point. But the fact that the business was more likely able to establish itself more quickly should offset this expense. The only other problem with incubators is that in reality there are not many of them. However, there is nothing stopping new businesses from joining together and forming their own "incubator" of sorts.

If you are unsure of where to start to find other new businesses that may need an incubator, there are several places to look. Contact your local Chamber of Commerce and tell them your needs, check with your local real estate office, your local commercial bank manager, attend courses targeted at new small businesses or contact the Canada Business Service Centre in your area.

Research - A Wise Investment

Researching a new business is the most important competitors and government always include questions about

Access Saskatchewan

A Dash of Dirt and a Pinch of Seeds, that's what Arlette Laird is made of

Arlette Laird has cooked up 101 unusual recipes - recipes that gardeners especially will enjoy. In January 2000, the Prince Albert resident published her first book, **The Joy of Planting: A Step-by-Step Guide to Creative Container Gardening**, which offers recipe ideas for planting in indoor and outdoor containers.

Laird worked at a non-profit greenhouse for 12 years. During that time she saw the need for a book that would help people put together attractive, colourful containers, as well as teach them about plants for containers. By October 2000 she had sold 5,000 copies.

She received some help along the way with her business plan and with researching printers and distributors from Gérald Gareau, an economic development officer with the **Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan (CCS)**, who is located in Prince Albert. Gareau worked in conjunction with WD Client Service officer Donna Préfontaine.

"After the book came out I went to see Gérald about promotional work for the spring," she comments. "I should go back to him now about my business plan to adjust cash flow numbers. It's good to have someone to work with on your plan, otherwise it's easy to let it slide. Having some guidance helps keep you on track."

Laird says she would recommend the Conseil to other Francophone entrepreneurs. "Because I'm part of the French community, I feel more at home there."

Arlette Laird was able to receive help from a CCS economic development officer because Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) contributed up to \$525,000 over three years for the organization to maintain its three Francophone EDO positions in offices in southern, central and northern Saskatchewan in 1998.

"With the economic development officers in place we've been able to reach a far greater number of potential and existing entrepreneurs," points out CCS Executive Director Robert Therrien. "Francophone communities at large have benefited. Without the WD funding this never would have happened."



CONSEIL
DE LA COOPÉRATION
DE LA SASKATCHEWAN



It's initiatives like this that have led WD to earn honours for its work with Official Language Minority Communities in Western Canada. On Oct. 5, Dr. Dyane Adam, the Commissioner of Official Languages, tabled her first annual report in Parliament. The Department was included on Commissioner Adam's Merit List of Positive Achievements.

Part VII, Section 41, of the Official Languages Act (OLA) states: The Government of Canada is committed to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development; and fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.

The Commissioner wishes to highlight the worthwhile initiative by Western Economic Diversification in making the effort to set up Francophone community development organizations in each of the four western provinces. These have permanent funding and administer funds to assist small and medium-sized businesses.

In April 2000, WD Saskatchewan region committed up to \$400,000 over three years as a loan loss reserve to the PAGE Credit Union Fransaskois Loan Program. The contribution reduces PAGE Credit Union's lending risk in providing loans of up to \$75,000 to eligible Francophone entrepreneurs across Saskatchewan.

The Conseil de la Coopération received \$90,000 over three years for a loans officer who is a liaison between the Francophone business community, PAGE Credit Union and WD. Discussions are underway in the other WD regions - B.C., Alberta and Manitoba to establish similar funds.

"We assist the Francophone entrepreneur with business plan development in their official language, then we used to say to them, 'Now, go out and find funding,'" explains Therrien. "Now with the Fransaskois loan program, we can offer a funding alternative in French. The program completes that circle of assistance. We are a one-stop business service organization for Francophone entrepreneurs."

The departmental vision concerning the Official Languages Act includes having a Francophone economic development organization in each western province; to increase accountability of these organizations; providing access to capital; and to support economic development initiatives in priority sectors identified by the Francophone communities themselves.

Research - A Wise Investment

Researching a new business is the most important competitors and government, always include questions about

Sprouting Business Success

They are tasty, organic and you may be adding them everyday to your sandwich. More than likely, the sprouts in your salad came from **Carolinnny Sprouts Ltd.** in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

In August 1997, Carolyn and Randy Pilling took ownership of a 15-year-old home-based business that produced five varieties of sprouts. Two years later when the time came to expand the business to a commercial operation, they approached **Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. (W.E.)** for a loan. W.E. assists businesswomen with services that include one-to-one business counselling, networking opportunities, resource information and repayable loans up to \$100,000.

The Pillings have added several new varieties to their product line and moved to a 2,300 square-foot building. Carolinnny Sprouts produces nine varieties of organic sprouts, including: radish sprouts, broccoli, sunflower, lentil and the more traditional alfalfa and clover sprouts.

"The radish tastes just like a red radish you'd plant in your garden and the broccoli tastes just like the broccoli vegetable," explains Pilling.

The company also produces several varieties of specialty sprouts called mixed sprouts. For example, an onion mixed sprout is a blend of onion sprouts with alfalfa and clover sprouts. Pilling says that the mixed varieties have a mild flavour and are excellent in salads and sandwiches.

Carolinnny sprouts are distributed through SERCA Food Service Inc. to hotels and restaurants in Saskatchewan and Alberta. The company has also had their products placed in Saskatchewan IGA grocery stores and with Westfair Foods, who supply food products to outlets including Superstore and Extra Foods stores.

"Ideally what we would like is to have our products available across Canada and the United States," says Pilling. "It takes time though to get a foot in the door. The hard part is to get people comfortable with the product and once they do, they realize the quality of the sprouts."

In October Carolinnny Sprouts was present at the Saskatchewan Food and Wine Festival.

"It was awesome to be part of the Festival," says Pilling. "We took samples for everyone to taste and the cooks used some of our sprouts in the salads for the gala banquet."

Terri Parent, Loans Officer with Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. in Saskatoon says she continues to meet with Carolyn to offer business consulting.

"Women Entrepreneurs is very pleased to be part of the development and growth of Carolinnny," says Parent. "We see it as a well-rounded entrepreneurial venture and are excited that we could support the Pillings in building a lucrative and successful enterprise."



Though gone are the days when the work of packing and growing sprouts would take up half of the basement of the family home, Carolinnny has always been a family business, with the Pilling's three children doing odd jobs when they can.

As the only commercial sprout producer in Saskatchewan, Carolinnny Sprouts has four full-time employees and three casual part-timers. Always mindful of the safety of their products, the Pillings have trained staff on stringent sanitation procedures


and put in place one of the world's best food safety programs called Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

W.E. is set up independently as a non-profit member organization committed to helping women succeed in business, with offices in Regina and Saskatoon. There are also chapters located in Arborfield, Yorkton, Prince Albert, Swift Current, Humboldt and North Battleford.

Pilling's contact with W.E. also continues on the local level. She is treasurer and a member of the Promotions Committee of the Prince Albert and Area Chapter of Women Entrepreneurs.

Full membership in W.E. costs \$75 and includes benefits such as access to insurance coverage, member referrals, advertising, training discounts and reduced rates at W.E. sponsored conferences.

Access Saskatchewan Access Saskatchewan Access Saskatchewan Access Saskatchewan Access



Finding the Pot of Gold when it comes to Business Plan Writing

Students in the Entrepreneurship and Small Business program at the **Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAT)**, Woodlands Campus in Prince Albert, have found the key to writing a practical business plan. They've tapped into the **Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC)** resource library located at the Prince Albert and District Community Futures Development Corporation office.

"We invited the SIAT class over during our open house for the regional site in September," explains Prince Albert CFDC general manager Wayne Cameron. "They're over here all the time now using it for their business plans."

The library is one of 16 Business Service Centre regional access sites in Saskatchewan. The CSBSC provides them with a collection of basic informational material in the first year, which is updated in the following years. Print library materials and resources available on CD-ROM include: Business Plan Handbooks; the Entrepreneurial Manual series; "HowTo" reference materials; statistical information and directories such as the Complete Canadian Franchise Guide, the Provincial Business Directory and the Small Business Source book.

SIAT instructor Debbie Suchorab says while Woodlands Campus has a library, it's very broadly based. Her students, who must complete the entrepreneurship program with a ready-to-use business plan, use the regional site at the CFDC for its very specific, small-business oriented, up-to-date materials.

The Prince Albert CFDC's resource collection is the largest business library in the city, according to Cameron. "It was a good move to partner with the CSBSC," he said. "The site rounds out our services to the public and makes us a one-stop centre for business resource materials." He estimates about 80 to 100 clients have used the materials since the Sept. 13-14 open house.

"Our original site in Prince Albert was with the (provincial) Regional Economic Development Authority," explains Emily Cherneski, regionalization coordinator with the CSBSC in Saskatoon. "But the Authority was in transition and people there felt the CFDC was a more appropriate location. The CFDC renovated its space and now we have a storefront location."

Cherneski adds that the CSBSC's core library will remain in Saskatoon because it would be too expensive to duplicate and decentralize all the materials. "The business resource library is just a small part of what the CFDCs do, but the feedback we've received is that the clients are pleased with the business library resources. The partnerships we've

created with the CFDCs and other agencies are working well." When the regionalization initiative is finished across the country, the 13 Canada Business Service Centres will have launched 383 regional sites as part of the Government of Canada's commitment to support economic development in rural Canada. Sites in rural Saskatchewan communities ensure a broader awareness of the CSBSC and its services, as well as those of the host organizations.

"We recognized that the host organizations were already in the business of serving clients," adds Cherneski. "What we've done is augment their existing resources. The CSBSC is focused on the benefit to the end-user. For us, it's all about networking partnerships and increased access to our resources. The result is the economic benefit to the province."

Clients using CSBSC materials will be able to access information directly. They may also call the CSBSC in Saskatoon for help with more complex or specific inquiries. Distance services, including the CSBSC's toll-free telecentre service, the 24-hour Info-FAX and Web site will continue to be provided from the Saskatoon location.

The CSBSC was established in 1994 as a joint partnership between the federal and provincial government to consolidate business information services into one central location. Its mandate is to serve small business by making available the information needed to succeed in today's business environment. Western Economic Diversification Canada and Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development are managing partners of the CSBSC.

Other CSBSC regional sites are: Weyburn, Swift Current, Outlook, Yorkton, North Battleford, Assiniboia, Broadview, Bruno, Estevan, Kindersley, La Ronge, Meadow Lake, Regina (at the Centre for Business Development and at the Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan for Francophone entrepreneurs) and Tisdale.

There are 13 Community Futures Development Corporations in Saskatchewan - funded by Western Economic Diversification - helping rural communities expand their economies by exploring new approaches to business development and providing access to business resources, counselling and financial assistance.

CFDCs can provide small and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurs access to loans not normally offered by financial institutions, including loans up to \$125,000 for new and existing small business owners.

Research - A Wise Investment

Researching a new business is the most important aspect of business start-up. Doing research can save time and money, as well as lots of frustration. Before investing money, invest your time. Find out if the idea is really viable. Your research will tell you this, along with the sales and financial projections you create from the research.

The first step of research is often the most difficult - knowing where to start looking for information. One of the most helpful sources is usually someone else who has done, or is doing, the same thing. Many people will dismiss this source, as they feel their competition will not want to talk with them. While sometimes this is true, many successful entrepreneurs want to share the difficulties they have come upon. Some may even welcome new competition into the marketplace. Choosing a competitor that is a distance away, but has a similar consumer base, will likely be the most helpful.

Another place to start sourcing information for many businesses is the government. You will want to make sure that there are no regulations prohibiting you from operating your business the way you are intending to operate. Be sure to check all orders of government (federal, provincial and municipal). The type of business you are planning on opening will determine with which government agencies you may need to speak. This is where someone who is already in the business will likely be able to help you the most. Often many new businesses find out too late that they are required to set things up according to health or safety regulations, and then end up spending many dollars that were not in the budget. This can jeopardize the business' success by using up cash that was earmarked for other areas, such as advertising and promotion, or was intended to cover operating expenses in the first few months.

The third area to research is costs. Determine what are all of the costs associated with the type of business you are interested in? Be sure to include EVERYTHING! Include: insurance (liability, fire theft, disability, etc.), hook-up costs, security deposits, renovation costs (be sure to always get three estimates and use the highest one in your forecasting, even if you go with a lower one) and phone (including: cell phone, Internet costs, yellow pages and other phone features that may cost extra). If you are hiring employees, include costs for your share of their government deductions. Don't forget things like bank charges, interest on loans and credit cards, licences, fees, permits, lawyers, accountants, consultants or things like meals and travel costs when doing research.

Another area to research is your customer, and this shouldn't necessarily be your last area to research, because without proof of a viable customer base, the rest of the information you research is useless! When doing your initial contacts with

competitors and government, always include questions about your potential customers. Ultimately you will need to observe and contact potential customers to verify that all the other data you received from secondary sources is indeed accurate. A survey is often the most effective way to achieve this. This information will be the basis for your sales estimates.

So go ahead and make that investment. But make it a wise investment by first doing the research and making sure it will truly be the business of your dreams!

Partners in Business

ALBERTA 2001

La Chambre économique de l'Alberta (La CÉA) is organizing the first-ever provincial Francophone economic development conference - *Partners in Business* - to be held in Edmonton on **March 2 & 3, 2001**. This conference will provide Francophone entrepreneurs across Western Canada, with valuable business opportunities.

Partners in Business will promote the sustainable development of minority-language communities by providing western entrepreneurs with a venue to forge new partnerships with other entrepreneurs, business leaders and government representatives. It will facilitate access to programs and services offered by federal organizations, make them more visible and allow federal representatives to assess what Francophone entrepreneurs require in terms of services and programming.

The opening sessions on March 2nd at La Cité Francophone, Edmonton's Francophone cultural and community centre, will provide participants with an opportunity to network with other entrepreneurs, members of the community and government representatives.

The formal conference will begin on Saturday, March 3rd, at the Ramada Inn Conference Centre. The conference program will feature presentations by government and business leaders on the Francophone tourism potential of Western Canada and Alberta's provincial economic development strategies.

Workshops will be held throughout the day and will cover such topics as the MERX bidding system, the impact of technology on small businesses and youth entrepreneurship. The conference will also provide participants with access to business development information from Western Economic Diversification and other federal/provincial departments. La CÉA anticipates 250 participants from across Alberta and the other western provinces.

Call now to get more information or benefit from early registration rates. Call 1-888-414-6123 or (780) 414-6125, or e-mail us at cea@lacea.ab.ca



La CÉA was established in 1998. Its mission is to promote, facilitate and coordinate the development of economic and tourism activities for Francophones in Alberta. It accomplishes this task by:

- developing incentives to have Francophones participate in economic development;
- bringing awareness to the French community and to Albertans on the added value of providing bilingual services;
- guiding business people with advisory services in the start-up and the expansion of their businesses, and offering support services in the development of the tourism industry; and
- encouraging networking between business people.

New Agreements to Boost Economic Development in Western First Nations

W*estern Economic Diversification is helping to ensure that business services are accessible to Western Canada's Aboriginal peoples.*

Aboriginal entrepreneurs face the same issues as those faced by other Canadians who want to start or expand their businesses. However, special circumstances faced by Aboriginal entrepreneurs make it difficult for them to access capital, markets, information and business services.

A recent survey by Statistics Canada of 100 Aboriginal businesses shared that 55 per cent of Aboriginal businesses reported inadequate access to capital, including equity and debt. This research clearly shows there is a need for additional capital for Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs. It is part of WD's mandate to ensure all small businesses in the West can access what they need to grow and expand.

By entering into new relationships with Aboriginal peoples, the federal government is helping Aboriginal organizations operate more effectively, enhance their lending portfolio and make a positive contribution to the success of their organizations and communities. For this reason, WD entered into partnerships with seven western **Aboriginal Capital Corporations (ACCs)** to provide western aboriginal communities with the benefits of membership in the Western Canada Business Service Network.

Presently, the ACCs provide lending services to their small business clients, but do not have the resources necessary to deliver business advice or counselling. The partnerships helps ACCs better meet the business service needs of their small business clients.

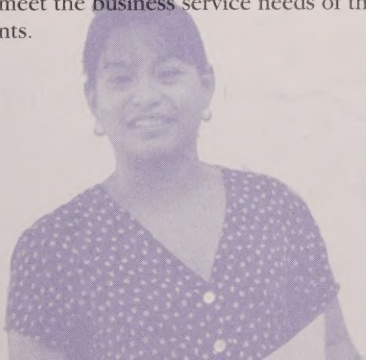
Currently, throughout the West there are seven "Aboriginally exclusive" Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) and seven others where the majority of their clients are Aboriginal. Many of WD's network partners provide comprehensive sets of business services to Aboriginal communities and clients located within their geographical boundaries.

For example, in Saskatchewan, the CFDC offices work closely with Tribal Councils in their areas. Community development is done at the grassroots level, offering workshops that strengthen working relationships by bringing together the key leaders to look at ways to develop new Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partnerships.

Although there is business support readily available to rural clients, Aboriginal entrepreneurs living in large urban centres do not have access to the services provided by CFDCs. WD is working to establish Aboriginal business development centres in urban areas that can extend business services to Aboriginal communities.

Last year, the Aboriginal Business Development Centre (ABDC) was launched in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The centre provides a range of services to strengthen existing Aboriginal businesses, as well as create new opportunities for Aboriginal people. What is especially unique about the ABDC's business is that its programs are delivered by Aboriginal people who bring with them an understanding of Aboriginal life experiences, traditions and business aspirations.

For more information call WD at 1-888-338-WEST (9378).



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Does your business need a health check?

The marketplace is changing. Sales are down; costs are up. E-business is causing competition from areas that didn't exist in the past. As a businessperson you're struggling to figure out how to fix your balance sheet.

You don't need a bandage to quickly fix the problem, what you need is a health check - someone who can discuss ideas that can help put your business back on its feet.

Or, you may have a very healthy, growing business, but an annual visit to a business physician for a diagnostic check-up could also help you manage your growth more effectively and ensure you remain competitive in the marketplace.

There is an old adage that the best things in life are free. Well, if you're a businessperson looking for someone to perform the check-up, then you need only look as far as your closest office of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

Client Service Officers are available to help you at no cost. They can hook you up to the WD diagnostic equipment and help you determine how to improve your business' health. They will take the pulse of the business to learn about what makes it tick, listen to your symptoms, perform a business diagnosis, and recommend solutions and a course of recovery. Sometimes their diagnosis may be a bitter pill to swallow. And, like medicine, they can't guarantee that their prescriptions will be successful.

A WD "business physician" can review your business plan and recommend areas that require work in order to access the financing your business may need to get started or to expand.

The assistance may be as simple as pointing you in the right direction of a specialist for the assistance you need. WD has formed expert associations with numerous professionals who may be just what the doctor ordered. A Client Service Officer

may be able to direct you to other government programs and services that might be the answer to your problem.

You may think you need to open new markets, when all you may really need is to take advantage of the market you're already in. You may think a business loan will heal a wound, when it may only cause complications for your business. A natural remedy may be as simple as reducing your inventory.

As international markets open up and e-business takes an increasingly important role in the way people do business, WD can help you explore export market opportunities and discover whether or not exporting is a viable option for your company. Or, they can help you access government procurement opportunities.

WD can recommend whether hiring a recent graduate would help your company in the area of developing international markets for your products or services. They may help provide your company with valuable scientific and technological expertise that will help to level the playing field so your business will have better opportunities to keep competitive and profitable in today's marketplace.

And, that's not where WD stops. They follow up with their clients when they can and continue to provide business counselling and a listening ear when you need to brainstorm new ideas.

WD is dedicated to helping business in Western Canada succeed. One phone call could make the difference in whether or not your business gets the right solutions for its continued good health and prosperity. If you would like to schedule your business check-up or would like more information about WD's programs and services, contact 1-888-338-WEST (9378) or visit our Web site at www.wd.gc.ca.

1-888-338-WEST (9378) www.wd.gc.ca

British Columbia

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Alberta

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9700 Jasper Avenue N.W.
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